

ELIZABETH OF BOONESBOROUGH

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PATTIE FRENCH WITHERSPOON



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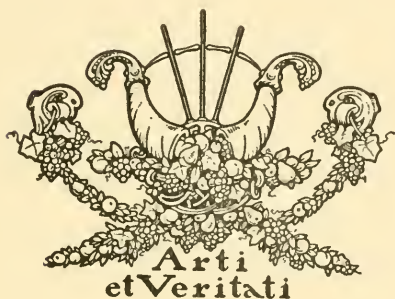
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ELIZABETH OF
BOONESBOROUGH
AND OTHER POEMS

PATTIE FRENCH WITHERSPOON

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BOSTON
THE POET LORE COMPANY
1909

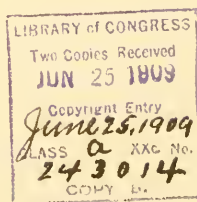
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1909



The Gorham Press, Boston, U. S. A



To

him whose fine mind and classic
taste served always as an in-
spiration to the little child who
sat an humble pupil at his feet

MY FATHER

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ELIZABETH OF BOONESBOROUGH

A CHARGE

Men of the muse, truth's prophets all professed,
If ye have aught to say then say it well,
Give to the waiting world your oath-sworn best,
Nor give that till convinced you have to tell
Some message that will cheer and interest,
And ring men back to truth with clarion bell.
Be in your own mind firm established lest
Your wavering faith should fail men's doubts to
quell,
But rather feed and foster their unrest,
When yours it is such doubts to move dispel,
Not with some anodyne to sick minds press'd
(Thou wouldst not dare betray the truth or sell).
That would but serve the world's applause to test
A sham, sensational show, poor fiction's spell,
That, lotus-like, makes men content to rest
Always beneath fragrance perverting fell.
Ye would not thus rob minds of righteous zest,
In lofty thoughts, ring for their taste death-knell.
Men of the muse, truth's prophets all professed,
If ye have aught to say then say it well,
Give to the waiting world your oath-sworn best,
Aye, ye who sing, sing truth's great message plain
And, God's word for it, ye shall not sing in vain.

TO-MORROW

Where dost thou hide, illusory to-morrow ?
In what far cave or island of the sea
Art thou detained by songs of joy or sorrow,
Ensnared by some Calypso's minstrelsy ?
Whether thy locks are golden all or hoary
We may not know, for none has seen thy face
To witness of thee. The frail morning glory
That welcomes the new day with her sweet grace
Unfolds and fades and seeds and tells the story
Of other days to come, but shows no trace
Of thy footsteps, illusory to-morrow,
Since neither man nor nature knows the place
Of thy abode, perchance we do but borrow
From myth or fable what we think should be,
Unless, to-morrow, thou'rt eternity.

THE DAY'S VOYAGE

Into thy deep, O Day, my bark I lower,
A wave of time's great ocean thou to me.
I do not know how far away from shore
I am, or whether storm or calm shall be
Hereafter, but I bend me to my oar,
With honest will, whate'er the destiny,
And thy best carrying power I implore.
Gone are all other days or good or ill,
And thou to-day art all I call my own,

See thou to it that right good winds do fill
My sails and my frail bark shall then be borne
Aloft above the roar of time's fierce foam
And chance may catch some glimpse of shore and
home.

TO A BIRD

No. 1

Oh winged one cleaving the shining blue,
And taking the universe view by view,
I would mount up, bird, and fly with you,
Up to thy world of empyrean blue.

Oh teach me the magic of your secret,
And make me forever to you in debt,
That I spend not life in a vain regret,
But tear from my feet earth's detaining net.

And thus unencumbered far upward fly
And sing with you, bird, in your haunts so high,
The whole world's attractiveness then descry,
The beauties of heaven, of sea, and sky,

Didst thou reveal it in sweet sympathy,
Such fetterless flitting's not meant for me,
The sky is your home, bird; earth mine, I see,
But we have in common one ecstasy.

No. 2

For though 'tis not given to men by choice
To mount up with wings I may yet rejoice
That we share in common a musical voice,
O bird, we may compliment each on his joys.

But hear now this truth through creation that
rings,
If there had been given to mortal men wings,
The world had been quitted by human beings,
And left to the silence of dumb crawling things.

'Twas not in God's purpose that mortals should
fly
You have your station, bird, and so have I,
'Tis not for created creator to try
By asking vain questions or wondering why.

I may not with you in your sky reaches cope,
Nor catch all the scintillance of your bright scope,
And yet 'tis not left to me darkly to mope,
For I have the uplift of radiant hope.

Some day, disengaged from encumbering clay,
My soul shall take flight and wing far, far away
From all limitations, from doubt and dismay,
Up, up to the light of an unending day.

MAGNETISM

You entered my mind with your quickening own,
You came a heart silence to fill,
Companionship followed, I walk not alone,
Your spirit through mine seems to thrill.

You touched the keynote of my hidden desire,
You woke all the chords of my heart,
You set my mind ringing as with poet's lyre,
In life's chorus showed me my part.

How was it you called me from lethargy's sleep,
From binding indifference chains,
Revealed to my own eyes my very heart's deep,
With tactful and exquisite pains?

I ask you to answer, be frank, can you tell,
The reason my heart's yearning for,
Explain to me fully the magnetic spell,
That seemed my locked lips to unbar?

You care not to answer. Ah, well, be it so,
'Tis too subtle for analysis,
Though hidden the cause the effect I may know,
And my grateful heart cries, "Enough this."

SILENCE

In silence deep the world began,
Cosmos from chaos moved;
God ordered the creation's plan
And silence all approved.

How silent still the universe,
God spake and God alone,
How calm nature, creation's nurse,
While listening to God's tone.

Mark you, sin did its reign begin
In subtle conversation,
The devil's words prevailed, did win,
Man fell and lost his station.

No lack of wicked words since then
For evil grows apace,
And it has often chanced that men
With words have caused disgrace.

How many arrows lurk within
The fool's unguarded speech;
Let fly in conversations din,
How far their poisons reach.

For oft they aim at mortal part,
Their fell and fatal blow,
A simple unsuspecting heart
Is unprotected foe.

And babels always do confuse,
And darken wisdom's way,
Men mystified truth cannot chioose,
But wander in dismay.

There may be wiser things to hear
Than we may ever say,
Then let us silently draw near
And listen while we may.

Aye, listen and our wisdom prove,
Hear what great men have said;
Perchance light may our clouds remove
Chase ignorance and dread.

CONFIDENCE

Pass by the weakness in silence,
The mantle of charity spread
Over the fault, and for aye hence
Let it be buried and dead.

Turn from the evil entombed,
Back to the living good go;
Behold how the virtues have bloomed
And covered the grave with their glow.

Buried forever his weakness,
Look closer, his good traits review;
Lo! now that we criticize him less,
The man seems created anew.

'Tis true to believe is to bless,
To encourage good habits to grow;
Did we believe more and distrust men less
The world would get better, I know.

VALUATION

He held it carelessly and light,
Esteemed it not, I trow,
He passed on pray'lessly life's right,
He did not seek to know.

But there are schools to teach such men,
The truths they would not know;
With rigid rules they teach and then
Men learn one truth — sorrow.

It chanced one died whom he had loved,
He could not stay death's hand,
Despair crushed pride, his soul was moved,
He tried to understand.

He looked at life's great enemy,
That stilled both hand and breath,
He saw God's plan, and finally he
Life's value learned from death.

LIFE

What will he do with it, life so inviting,
Full of both promise and prospect to youth?
Full of glad prophecies, all of whose writing
Gleam with appearance of wisdom and truth.

What will youth do with life? Be in it, be of it,
Sing with the joyous and weep with the sad;
Cry out in concert with each every spirit,
Live in the multiform life of the lad.

What will man do with life, life so entrancing,
Full of the rapturous glamour of love,
That all the beauty of earth seems enhancing,
Making it radiant like Eden above?

What will man do with life? Joy and delight
in it,
As if creation were set to a song;
Thirsting and drinking, yet never to heart surfeit
Love is the portion that lasts while life's long.

What will age do with life? Life, life so intricate,
Throbbing with problems that men need to
solve?
Full of the mysteries that shroud poor mortals'
fate,
And e'en immortal souls seek to involve.

What will age do with life? Go ask the earnest
sage,

Hear him say all of his life he'll devote,
Seeking to read to men creation's real message,
Truths which the unerring hand of God wrote.

WHEN LIFE IS THROUGH

When life is through, 'twill be a very restful thing
to do,

Lie down and sleep,
Through war's alarms, through pestilence, dis-
seases, harms
No vigils keep.

Methinks the calm must prove a very welcome
balm

To spirits tired;
The deep dark still, a sweet relieving to the will
No longer fired.

No duties there, no knowledge of returning care
Pervading rest,
No choking sigh, no watching for a time to cry,
A tranquil breast.

No seed to sow, no search for barns where to
bestow,
No sense of strain;

No watch for light to work and toil with strenuous
 might,
No loss or gain.

No haunting dread, no chances there to be misled,
 No longing hearts;
No dark distress or dreary sense of consciousness,
 No friend departs.

Though there seem gloom let not thy soul shrink
 from the tomb,
 But rather dread
Returning life, the call to peace or endless strife
 Of all the dead.

LINES TO MY MOTHER'S PORTRAIT

What sweet companionship doth fancy lend
 To one who would her genial aid command;
To one who knows her truly as his friend,
 And follows at the guiding of her hand.

I sit beside your portrait, mother mine,
 To think myself back in your life again,
Let present with the past so intertwine
 That I your little child may still remain.

Sweet portrait, be more than a memory,
Come, fancy, fill my thoughts so full of her
As I shall seem her living self to see,
And feel her presence by as she did stir.

Thou dost smile at me now as long ago,
With love the deepest grave can ne'er efface,
For love lives on and on — God willed it so,
Sweet love that I found first in mother's face.

I like to note the calm stretch of thy brow,
'Tis placid as a brooding bird at eve
Or like some suppliant dew-prayer'd with the vow
Of motherhood when first she did receive

From God, the great eternal one, a child,
A spirit soul launched from infinite space,
The while her mother's heart leapt forth and
smiled
In radiance that glorified her face.

'Tis now your eyes, sweet eyes so brave and true,
I dwell upon with satisfaction deep,
Ah, motherhood, methinks God gave to you
A royal share of His great love to keep,

And thus exemplify to all the earth
The wondrous life that waits the wingèd soul,
For if in part love here may have its birth,
In heaven it will be perfect made and whole.

A look of straining eagerness I see
Flash from your eyes as if they sought to scan,
The future dark and trace the destiny
Of each dear child and mold it in love's plan.

O God, that with thy veil of mystery
Conceal'st in mercy future weal and woe,
I thank thee that those dear eyes did not see
The sad'ning truths they did not need to know.

Yet each day saw revealed enough to bear,
For eyes that needs must fade with bitter tears;
O, mother, I thank God that thou couldst share
With him the burden of the dreary years.

Sweet mouth, well framed to suffer and endure,
To gladden other lives with thy brave smile,
Thy neighbors' grief thou didst attempt to cure,
Though thine own heart was bleeding all the
while.

Had I the artist's skill at my command,
The subject that I first should undertake
Would be the painting of my mother's hand,—
I'd rest my fame on what my brush should make.

Oh, it would not be smooth and soft and white,
Unselfish motherhood it would explain,
Love's heart reveal, and it would bring to light
The kindly deeds recorded in each vein.

Mother, I did not know you in your youth,
The face you bent o'er me with care was seamed,
But I shall know you, sweet assuring truth
In heaven's renewal, for ofttimes I've dreamed

That I beheld a being wondrous fair,
And lo! such ecstasy to me was given,
I wept for joy, when sweet voice did declare
It is thy mother's youth renewed in heav'n.

Alas, my sighs dissolve in empty space;
Would they were wingèd and could reach up
afar,
Pierce through the vault of heaven, and find the
place
Of thy abode, though it be some great star.

Ah portrait, portrait, thou dost mock my mood,
For I am sad to-night and lone and weak,
And I would crave of thee a greater good,
That thou shouldst ope thy lips and sweetly
speak

In cadences of gentle peace and cheer,
With words that from thy mouth were wont to
pour,
How strange to fancy my own mother near,
Alas, but silent now forevermore.

Poor orphan child, how fancy tricked and caught.
Orphan, how somber sounding is the word,

For now deep grief the meaning plain has taught
Orphan to speak and nevermore be heard

By one whose ear was always sensitive
To slightest plaint or need of her dear one,
The while her willing hands were quick to give
The sweet relief that love has always done.

Ah! though space infinite does seem to bar
Thy child so that in vain complaints do pour,
Perchance thou art not lodged in realms afar,
But watchest guardian angel at my door,

Removed from me but by frail human line,
Ephemeral that death one day will break,
When lo! my soul flesh-freed shall follow thine
To find thee watching, watching for my sake.

THE POET

A solitary figure on the hill,
He seems a part of nature's landscape there,
So calm he is, so motionless and still,
Perchance an humble man absorbed in pray'r

Or recluse wrapped with self's absorbing need.
What ruling passion does his face portray?

His straining eyes world searching seek to read,
Unwritten truths that throng his lonely way.

A solitary figure in the town,
He finds no comrade there to call his own,
Gay troops of men pass laughing up and down,
The solitary man walks on alone.

A settled sadness furrows all his brow,
He wonders, wonders what his fate would be
If he should dare recant his solemn vow,
And from his thralling destiny fly free.

Withhold his hands forever from their duty,
Forever turn his back upon his task
Forswear himself interpreter of beauty,
Translator of the message men would ask.

.

A solitary man waits by the sea,
Recording all the music of her moan,
No longer sad or silent now is he,
For he has read the deep, low undertone

Of rushing winds, of waves, of whirring wings,
The dim, blurred language of great nature's
page,
Lo! loosed his tongue the poet now may sing,
And tell the waiting world nature's message.

THE PITY O'T

Oh, I could have wept for the pity o't,
A mother bird on quest
Called wildly for the nursling
That had wandered from her nest.
The deep, deep pathos of her moan
Threw minor chords in ev'ning's tone,
And I was filled with dread and fears,
But the bird went forth in a wild life search, for
a mother's heart was hers.

Oh, I could have wept for the pity o't,
She was so young and fair
To be hid down in the cold ground,
Aye, buried anywhere;
For in her fair and fragile face
Was beauty's self in death's embrace,
And my tears flowed on without surcease,
But she was calm, ah very calm, and the dead babe
seemed at peace.

Oh, I could have wept for the pity o't,
Another just as fair
Had pallor spreading on her cheek,
And silver in her hair.
A haunted look was in her eyes
As of a bleeding sacrifice
That fain would die, but lived on still,
Condemned to live and know life's ill,

But my tears had fallen all alone,
For she was patient, calm as death and her lips
gave out no moan.

Oh, I could have wept for the pity o't,
A woman brave and good,
Clothed in the matchless beauty
Of wondrous motherhood,
Gave all her love and care and pride
To the boy growing at her side,
Her life was spent his own to bless,
He gave her back but bitterness,
And my heart went weeping at the sight,
But she lived on in her love for him, her comfort
and her mother's right.

SIMPLE AGGY'S QUEST

Which way o'er the mountains went mother?
I'm seeking her all the day through,
I'm seeking the path that she followed,
That I may take that pathway too,

They tell me she went up to heaven,
But, oh, heaven's so hard to find,
At least for a poor child like Aggy,
Who gets things confused in her mind.

I sought heaven up on the lone peak,
Far out by the bald eagle's nest,
Oh, if I could just have found mother,
And leaned there awhile on her breast.

But wild were the winds there and chilling
And dreary and lonely the place,
And heaven is not there, I'm certain,
For I did not see mother's face.

I sought heaven down in the valley,
Where doves coo and white lilies blow,
But I did not hear mother's voice,
So heaven is not there I know.

My feet are all weary and bleeding,
But I must keep wandering on,
I'll seek mother all through the daylight,
By starlight from ev'ning till morn.

They tell me to wait and be patient,
That Jesus will call me some day,
But, oh, if He's coming to call me —
I want to start out on the way

To meet Him, and then I can pass on,
Right on to my mother and God,
Oh, if I could just find the pathway
That mother and Jesus have trod.

I'll find it if I will keep walking,
I always do find what I seek;
'Twas I found the home of the eagle
Far out on the crest of the peak.

'Twas I found the way of the wildcat,
I traced him deep down to his den,

And then when I knew where his haunt was
I ran back and told all the men.

I follow the birds in their nesting
To many a desolate place,
And though they are wild as the west wind,
They seem not to mind Aggy's face.

For often I peep in upon them,
As shy as the shadows of eve,
They seem not to know of my presence,
I'm one of the shadows, they b'lieve.

And thus would I come upon heaven
And mother, with echoless feet,
And then when she saw me she'd wonder
What made little Aggy so fleet.

The moonlight broke full on the mountain,
And Aggy, unable to rest,
Crept stealthily out from her lone bed,
To follow her sorrowful quest.

Through moonlight and shadow she wanders,
Oft stumbling, oft stopping to pray,
A crash! She is falling, is falling,
Ah, precipice deep, the dark way.

All silent she lies there, and lifeless,
While crimson her blood stains the ground,
But the smile on her face gives assurance
That heaven and mother are found.

CALLIOPE'S COMPLAINT

How disregarded am I now,
Who once wore laurel on my brow,
Who once of all the sisterhood
The fairest and most honored stood.

What influence I wielded then,
My shrine the Mecca of all men,
Within my hands the magic lyre
Proclaimed me classic lore's umpire.

The king a despot o'er his court,
Meek learned of me and verses wrote,
While all the courtiers in his train
Desired of me an answering strain.

And more, the peasant in his cot,
Beguiled by me, his toil forgot,
The while his mind in gay pursuit
Of melody sang through the lute.

Thus old and young sought the sublime,
In winged uplifting of sweet rhyme,
Inspired by me and my message,
Men cried, lo! 'tis the golden age.

Alas, how times have changed since then,
The poets sing in vain to men,
And I th' inspiring muse sad sigh,
While thoughtless throngs pass heedless by.

In search of loud sensational prose,
The deadliest foe the poet knows,
Bad literature holds noisy fairs,
Where charlatans loud cry their wares.

And o'er these sad conditions I
Do watch and ponder, wonder why.
Maybe 'tis not the world's sole fault,
Perchance the poets stumble, halt.

Or hide my face with abstruse lines,
Nor wit nor wisdom well divines,
Discouraging the search for truth,
To learned age and simple youth.

Perplexing words are not inclined
To woo and win the human mind,
Therefore truth's advocates should be,
As clear, transparent as the sea.

Unmask my face, poets, again,
And let me speak through simple strain,
And with my magic I will woo
A world of listeners back to you.

DEATHLESS MAN

On his tombstone was written in letters of gold
His birth and his death. Ah, but nothing was
told

Of the record that made up the sum of his years,
Of the sowing in laughter or reaping in tears.

He was born and he died, aye, but what fell be-
tween,

The coming and going not his task, I ween,
For God launched his life, but what voyage made
he

E'er he landed forever in Eternity?

Did he sail the sea bravely and guide his craft
well?

The boat and his master are gone, who can tell,
And lichen and moss grow in crevices dark
Of tombstone now older than sailor or bark.

Ah, lowly he lies in the moulding clay,
And his boat song is lost to the sea and the quay,
He lived and he died on the tombstone is marked,
He tossed awhile here and then swiftly embarked.

Gone body, gone spirit, is all of him gone,
Is naught left to testify but "he was born" ?
Nay, now, it must be something's left of the man,
The bridge is not burned thus, the bridge of life's
span.

For perish may such things as vintage and mead,
But never can perish the act or the deed,
They live on forever in influence' guise,
Then never more say that the whole of man dies.

For other men lead on the life he has led,
Another man echoes the words he has said,
In new combinations do old things appear,
A young man's oft eradled on some old man's bier.

Should I write an epitaph on granite gray,
I'd write he was born and I'd leave God to say,
All the rest to tell just when influence dies,
For truth at that distance no mortal discries.

TO MY FATHER'S EYES

Ah, two lights went out when he closed his eyes
On the earth for aye,
With the pall of my grief over-spreading the
skies,
Seems to fall from on high.

No radiance so bright, so serene and so mild,
As his two orbs held,
The force of a man, the faith of a child,
In their depths I spelled.

No storm cloud of grief could darken their gaze,
Steady their burning,
Orphans they seemed snatched from heav'ns
bright blaze
For heaven yearning,

Aye, aye, sparks of heaven they, lent to the
earth,
Just for awhile,
Alas to regret, had I reckoned their worth,
I'd lived in their smile.

Akin to the glory that follows sunset,
Their lingering light,
In radiant memory streams to me yet,
And pierces grief's night.

Oh, memory, blest, but the world does not know,
Their powerful spell,
A suppliant, Lord, through earth I would go,
If I might but tell

The wonderful kindness that shone in his eyes,
Their magnetic grace,
That burned on in splendor like stars in the
skies,
And haloed his face.

MASTERS THREE

I learned of love and wiser grew,
And life taught much to me,
I learned of death and then I knew,
Death's truth mortality.

O life, O death, great masters you,
But love is greater still;
Love takes the transcendental view,
And looks beyond earth's ill.

Love reads supernal horoscope,
Soul destinies forecasts,
Love lights the grave with star of hope,
Love lasts while heaven lasts.

AVE POETA!

Hail to thee, high poet, thou prophet of the truth,
Revealing mysteries in language plain,
Devoting all th' effort and vigor of thy youth
To that which can but bring thy neighbors gain.

What is the weird alchemy of this thy wondrous
thought,
Through what strange, occult process thy words
run,
That they appear to others as though some sage
had wrought
And forged them in the light of wisdom's sun.

For this thine art can take the smallest roadside
 weed,
And with thy magic skill so endue it,
That it shall seem to cry aloud great nature's
 creed,
And preach to men from its humble pulpit.

The daisy in the meadow, the violet in the dell,
 The stately oak upon the distant hill,
Thou seemest to make alive and bid each tongue
 to tell,
Some revelation of creator's will.

The singing of a bird, thine art doth well translate,
 As echo of a far celestial clime,
And with devoted skill thy fancy doth create,
 From disconnected sounds a world of rhyme.

Philosopher art thou, that teachest all the while
 Some heaven-directed word of truth to man,
And with musicians' art his ear thou dost beguile,
 To hear the purpose of creator's will.

Hail to thee, sweet bard, thou guardian of high
 trust,
Be loyal to the great commission given;
Spurn thou corroding care, though all the world
 may lust,
Regard thyself as voice sent out from heav'n.

MEMORY

Must I live on
When those who loved me best are long, long
gone,
And I drift out sadly,
A shattered ship upon a boundless sea,
Dreary, forlorn?

Across the main
Comes there a voice of love to me again?
Hark, the dull ocean's tone,
Sobs out the echo of my heart's deep moan,
Crying in vain.

How drear the way!
Lone craft wrapped in the shadows of dismay;
Darkness within, without,
Oh, for a voice to cry "forward," "push out,"
Nor longer stay.

Ha, recollection moves
My heart, and dull despair loudly reproves,
When there does come to me,
From memory more boundless than the sea,
The light of other loves.

Lo! this that stays,
And cheers the heart amid the world's dismays,
Sounds from afar,
The voice of one that lingers on the bar,
Guiding my ways.

Cry not to me,
Sad heart, thou art alone upon life's sea,
For do thou listen low,
Thou'lt hear sweet whisperings of long ago,
Through memory.

NOVEMBER

In mournful mood November days,
Fall bleakly on the earth,
Sharp, sudden gusts sigh through the maize
The funeral dirge of mirth.

How sadly, silently they fall,
The leaves brown crisped with frost,
How drear the crow's shrill, raucous call,
Through bare limbs tempest-tossed.

Broad is the view, yet what's in sight?
Brown earth, a lowering sky,
Behold the world in mourning plight,—
November passes by.

A grim, gray nun, with close-drawn hood,
In ghostly garb arrayed,
With breath of frost she chills the wood,
The birds look on dismayed.

With frown of disapproval on,
She haunts the meadows too,

The violet sheltered 'neath the thorn
May not hide from her view.

A close-cowled face November wears,
And suffering makes her creed;
In gusty groans she chants her prayers,
Each raindrop counts a bead.

O nun, so cold, so cheerless, gray,
With self-inflicted pain,
When wilt thou cease thy pray'rs to say,
To count thy beads the rain?

Thou shouldst not thus forswear all mirth,
From pleasures turn away,
Remember God will give to earth
The radiance of May.

A YEAR AND A DAY

All the lambs were at play when he floated away
In his fisher boat so strong,
All the world too was gay with the trappings of
May,
And his heart was gay with love's song.

'Twas a glad sight to see all the good folk of Dee,
As they gathered close down on the shore,
With their "God fill your sails and fend you from
gales,"
And they shouted it o'er and o'er,

Then a maiden drew near and her eye held a tear,
The fairest young maiden in Dee,
Though she heard the birds' lays and the sailor
lads' praise
She heard too the ominous sea.

Soon her tears were desried and the lad said in
pride,
"Nay, lass, do not worry, I pray,
For when next at your side, I will call you my
bride,
An' 'twill be but a year and a day."

Then the village folk cried, "Quick, out with the
tide"
And they shouted right gaily the while,
For they guessed at the grief of that parting so
brief,
And they sought the sad hearts to beguile.

Then as forward he sprang the entire welkin rang,
With "Luck to you lad," "A good sail,"
"May your winds never wrangle, your ropes never
tangle,
Your heart and your boat never fail."

The lad cried once more to the folk on the shore,
"Good by to you, friends, I'm away,
But, an' God give me speed, my last words you may
heed,
I'll be home in a year and a day."

Then the friends turned them back on the broad
village track

One maiden alone chose to stay,
Though her brow was sun-kissed, her dark eyes
hung with mist,
The mist of the year and the day.

For the sea's sullen moan seems her heart's very
tone

Resenting the fate of her way,
Oh, why — why must she lend her love to the sea,
To the sea for a year and a day?

All the world seems a waste since his form is
effaced,

And hushed is the song of the May,
For her own joy must wait for the turn of his fate,
Must wait for a year and a day.

Oft her yearning heart craves from the far-
reaching waves

Some message of love! Ah, dismay,
With the ocean between comes from that one unseen
No word of the year and the day.

Like slow-crawling clouds pass the days in their
shrouds

Of fear, that no hope can allay
And the seagull's wild screams seem the tongues
of her dreams

Foreboding the year and the day.

Ah, could prayers fill his sail, then his winds
would not fail

For often she stoops there to pray,
And her words and the sea chant a wild litany,
That rings through the year and the day.

But 'tis over at last, all the slow time is past,
And her heart yearneth sore for the quay,
As a bride robed in white she goes forth at the
light,—

Oh, what of the year and the day?

May bells breathe their sweet 'neath her fast-flying
feet,

She heeds not, there's no time to stay;
For lo! the white sea, O God, can it be,
He has come with the year and the day?

Bright hopes fill her breast as she follows her
quest,

Once more she can hear the birds' lays,
For she trusts he's come home from the ocean's
white foam,

Come home for all years and all days,

But she stumbles and falls. Ah, a dread sight
appals,

A man washed up dead blocks her way.
Lo! she looks in his face, now God give her grace,
'Tis the lad come the year and the day.

COMBATANTS

I dreamed a dream it chanced to be,
I thought two brothers strove
And struggled hard for mastery,—
Hate and his brother Love.

Bright Love was clothed in brilliant hue,
A rainbow on his brow.
I murmured as he came to view,
“God grant he conquer now.”

Then Hate stood forth like dark storm-cloud,
A fierce and furious knight,
With brow so threatening and proud,
He awed me into fright.

No word they spoke, but closed and clasped
Each tested other's might,
Cowed into silence I but gasped,
And watched the fateful fight.

Lo, then, on me a fearful dread,
Descended like a pall,
I closed my eyes and bowed my head,
“O God, if Love should fall.”

Prostrate upon the ground I stayed,
I do not know how long,
But this I know, while there I prayed,
At length a flutelike song

With softest cadence smote my ear,
And charmed me to my feet,
And lo! I saw that Love stood near,
In victor's garb complete.

I tried to speak and faintly said,
"I pray thee, Love, explain,
Can it be true that Hate is dead,
And you alone remain?"

"Not dead," he answered, "but removed,
And fled to other field,
In testing I my courage proved,
And broke through Hate's thick shield."

I looked around, beneath, above,
But I no weapon saw,
"How didst thou win," I asked of Love,
"In this mysterious war?"

He smiled and said, "'Twas not by might,
For Hate is strong as I,
I but convinced him in the fight,
That Love can never die."

THE PLOWMAN'S CREED

When all the land fresh bathed in dew,
Lay pure and clean as some new world,
E'er yet the sun had melted through
The mists that dusky night unfurled,

Forth to the field the plowman went,
Yoked hand in hand with morning light,
Twin laborers they with one intent,
To labor on until the night,

Gay birds sang blithely overhead,
As man and team passed o'er the sod,
While flowers, bruised beneath their tread,
Breathed out their incense unto God.

Lo! now they've reached the field, they pause,
The plowman knows that he must heed,
The open text of nature's laws,
Must till the ground and sow the seed.

With strong right hand he grasps the plow,
The eastern sky is flaming red,
The sweat breaks out upon his brow,
The plowman starts to earn his bread.

Deep sinks the plowshare in the soil,
And upward rolls the dark, rich loam,

The plowman smiles to think his toil
Will give life-food to those at home,

And as they slowly onward move,
The plowman falls in pleasant mood,
He knows he follows in the groove,
God put man in to earn his food.

Though brave his heart, his arm full strong,
He does not try to reap all lands
Though bright the sun, the day right long
'Twas meant for his and other hands.

The plowman in his simple creed
Knows nothing of absorbing trust,
Enough for him to earn his mead,
And leave the rest to those who lust.

He looks before him, glances back,
Surveys the work that he has done,
Behind him lies his labor's track,
He smiles with pride at furrows run.

At length light fades, the skies grow dim,
And man and team now homeward start,
South winds sing out th' evening hymn,
The plowman echoes in his heart.

Glad hopes within him brightly burn,
He thinks not of fatigue or soil,

Children and wife wait his return,
Loved ones supported by his toil.

He pauses in the dim half light,
And lifts aloft his strong right hand,
"O God, I thank thee for this might,
'Tis better far than gold or land."

A smile breaks out upon his face,
And lights it up though rugged brown,
He strides toward home with kingly grace,
Content, his diadem and crown.

ODE TO THE DOVE

When day put on her dusky hood,
I went into the twilight wood,
And walking on sought out the glen,
The most remote from haunts of men,
From feathered throat
There fell a note
Mellifluent as flowers afloat,
Eager to see I onward strove,
And lo! on leafy bough, a dove,

As some recluse who never heeds
The world, withdraws to tell his beads,

So sits the dove in rapturous mood,
Her altar shrine the darkest wood,
 Tender and faint,
 Her sweet complaint,
 Floats on the air
 A vesper pray'r
Though dark the sky, the prospect dim,
Like tapers flame the dove's sweet hymn.

Unmindful of the feathered throng,
She sings her elegiac song,
Her gentle voice dull care's surcease,
Emblem of heaven's eternal peace.
 Like form of dove,
 E'en God's own love,
 Took wingèd birth
 And came to earth
To mark the pleasing work begun,
To show the well-beloved son.

Thy name with love does so entwine,
No wonder thou seem'st half divine,
And mak'st our souls upward aspire
By voice that seem'st celestial fire.
 Oh, wouldst thou tell,
 Sweet oracle,
 Of lowly dell,
 Thy magic spell,
Enough, sweet dove, a priestess thou,
Each plaintive note a solemn vow.

POETA NASCITUR

Close to the casement he flew,
My wingèd friend,
A beam from the infinite blue,
Swift to descend.

Silent but certain the aim,
Graceful the poise
Like spirit from heaven he came
Scattering joys.

O bird, from thy skyland afar,
That spurneth the ground,
Tell me what thy talents are,
For making such sound,

As thrills through thy rapturous lays,
I envy thy mood
That giveth so much time to praise
So little to food,

Or clouded or sunlit the day
Thou carrolest on,
With sweet perseverance of lay
Whatever the morn.

Thy spirit thus pinioned in praise
Thy atmosphere love,
No wonder thy body doth raise
To regions above,

Continue thy minstrelsy then,
To listening earth,
Thy lyrics unquestioned by men,
Thou poet from birth.

THE PILOT

A timid soul looked out to sea,
And all the sky was gray,
"Oh, who will come and pilot me,"
Cried poor soul in dismay.

Then out spoke hate with scornful brow,
"Soul, I will pilot thee;
I'll spurn the waves about my prow,
Defy eternity."

"Nay, now," cried soul, "I fear thee, hate,
For thou art stern and ill,
I dare not trust to such a fate,
Whate'er may be thy skill."

In swelling tones spoke blatant pride,
"Ambition wins the prize,
"An' soul, thou'lt take me for thy guide,
Assured thy enterprise."

Lo! then cried one fair, modest eyed,
"Pray let me pilot thee;
Love guides safe souls through time and tide,
And through eternity."

" 'Tis well," cried soul, "love is my choice,
Aye, love shall pilot me,
Depart ye all, love heed my voice
Now put me out to sea."

LINES SUGGESTED BY A DESERTED HOUSE

An air of desolation o'er the place,
No face looks out from casement bare,
No sound of children on the stair,
A general lack of ease and want of grace,
Pervades the dreary atmosphere.
And makes one start at thought of fear,
And fancy at each turn goblin's grimace.

Hark, through each vacant room the sad winds
 roar,
While down the chimney's yawning throat
Undying whispers seem to float,
Wild words condemned to echo evermore,
And reproduce in gusty tone,
The very accent, wheezy tone,
Of him who gave them voice long years before.

Emptied of human forms how desolate,
The hall where once there used to meet
The host, advancing guests to greet,
Who oft would cry their joyance from the gate,
No footsteps now along the flags,
How drearily the hour drags,
What of the tardy guests so late, so late.

What of their host, a churl was he or kind,
A hospitable man indeed,
Or was he miser of his mead

As if he saw a famine clear outlined
And thought with watchful stint and dole
To lay up treasure for his soul,
Oh, was he wise and good or spirit blind ?

What aims starlike shone from ambition's skies,
And led men to assemble here,
'Neath summer vines and yule log's cheer,
Came they to gain hopes cherished in their eyes,
Or did they merely chance this way
To pass the time, beguile the day,
Came they through idleness or enterprise.

I conjure you, oh, grim, gray walls to tell,
The secrets of thy past to me,
Reveal thy owner's destiny
And show what sort of men came here to dwell,
Ah, silent walls, methinks you say,
As plain as words in your decay,
That time rings for all men one common knell.

TO A CARDINAL

O radiant bird, with coat of flame,
And blithesome tongue that seems the same —
So sunny is thy note,
How sweetly dost thou pierce the gray,
Of winter with thy cheerful lay,
Hope's melody afloat.

When somber skies disperse the snow,
And all the earth seems in the throe
Of winter's rigid sway,
Thou, thou, alone art not afraid,
Undaunted seemest, and undismayed,
By dark clouds' vast array.

For from thy temples deep, the pine,
Bursts forth a melody of thine,
That thrills the very earth
If thou canst sing at such a time,
When all the world seems out of rhyme,
A king art thou of mirth,

By such unusual melody,
We judge thou must a stranger be,
Strayed to a world unknown.
And by thy minstrelsy sublime,
We guess the rapture of thy elime,
That woos us in thy tone.

It may be thou art joy's high priest,
That sings when there seems reason least
For exultation here,
For from thy far dark temple's shrine,
Pours rhapsody that seems divine.
To dwellers of this sphere.

Sing on, sing on, O wondrous bird!
Cry to the world thy cheering word,
Of rapture incarnate,
And by the potency of art,
Teach what awaits the human heart,
In a celestial state.

THE VILLAGE INN

Oh, a wonderful place was the village inn
As it stood in the long ago,
Where the old men and young men came gather-
ing in,
The news of the village to know.

A fire of pine logs sputtered loud on the hearth,
And scattered all semblance of gloom,
While the joke with answering chorus of mirth
Echoed through the length of the room.

The judge just from office stopped by for awhile,
To lighten his burden of care,
To notice a joke with a decorous smile,
And tilt slightly back in his chair.

But the jest he considered as having no worth,
He frowned at with judicial stare,
Thus showing inherited talent at birth,
The judge was a judge everywhere,

The doctor came too, fully conscious of worth,
That showed as he smiled on the crowd,
Lo! he was man's friend from his entrance, through
birth,
To his exit, through coffin and shroud.

The lawyer and judge might command honors
 great,
The thought did not check his bland smile,
'Twas known that the doctor controlled human
 fate,
And made very living worth while.

Dark rainclouds descended in unceasing pour,
But the Inn proved a shelter for all,
For the farmer home bound with his newly
 bought store,
And for urchins who slyly played ball.

And for dogs that crept in through the half-open
 door
And fawned for a sheltering place,
And finding their masters, stretched out on the
 floor
And dreamed of the field and the chase.

And the schoolteacher came with his spectacled
 stare
To look on at life for awhile,
To see the temptations of Vanity Fair
That seemed simple men to beguile.

Ah 'twas ignorance truly that held them in
 thrall
And made men depraved in their taste,

Could he put them in school, the innkeeper and
all,
Their minds need not thus go to waste.

In a few moments more stepped the good parson in,
A stranger he felt himself plain,
The excuse on his face showed he hoped 'twas no
sin,
For a parson to stop out of rain.

A pause in the talk as the door opened wide,
There entered a young country swain
And the maiden he led he designed for his bride
But he'd sought for the parson in vain.

For the magistrate also, the county clerk too,
Everywhere in the village he'd been,
Lo! magistrate, parson, and clerk came to view,
For the village was all at the Inn.

Oh, a wonderful place was the Village Inn,
As it stood in the long ago,
Where the old men and young men came gathering
in
The news of the village to know.

TO THE SILENT LYRE

How cold and silent art thou, lyre,
That in time's past didst feel the fire
Of poet singing bold his lay,
That led the world on music's way.

Ah, life was gay and joyous then,
When harmony controlled all men,
Throbbing through earth in all her parts,
Echoing back from human hearts.

When music reigned in every breast,
No need to search for change or rest,
Imagination chaffeur was
That ran the poet's motor cars.

And, oh, what daring flights they took,
Searched earth through every spot and nook,
And more they dared attempt the stars,
Nor time nor space the poet bars.

And tourists then were not afraid,
For safely was each journey made,
A rustic bench, a shady nook,
The outing was plus one good book.

But times are changed, and now no more
Men seek diversion as of yore,
They say the poet is too slow.
Can automobiles faster go ?

Why hurl reproof and not applause,
Why on the poet's lyre make wars,
And seek to hush his tuneful string
By criticism's poisoned sting?

Sing on, ye poets, spite of faults,
The world will stop when music halts,
For harmony makes all things strong,
Stars in their courses poet's song.

For while time lasts and earth remains,
The lyre shall sound melodious strains,
Poets shall pipe from morn till morn,
Though there be none to follow on.

Oh, would some earnest soul afire
Might strike thy string's neglected lyre,
And so the melody prolong
The world should wake to power of song.

ELIZABETH OF BOONESBOROUGH

I

By the flowing of a river winding round 'neath
foothills' shade
In the forest dense a clearing that the hand of God
had made,
And had filled with tuneful waters that sang of His
majesty,
As the siren-voiced conch-shell sings its sonnet of
the sea —

Lay a valley fair and fertile in the boundless green
a gap,
Where the sunshine poured her largesse, as it
seemed, in nature's lap
And bestowed in great luxuriance a field of clover
green
That appeared to catch its brilliance from the
flashing water's sheen.

In the valley, lo! a treasure stored by one who
knew its worth,
Gushing free a spring of water greatest boon to
thirsting earth.
Forest feasting here kind nature seemed to spread
before her sons,
Banquet-hall for every creature both the wild and
timid ones.

Came there to this valley fertile as a part of God's
good plan,
That nature should yield her choicest gifts unto
her monarch man,
Daniel Boone, the great explorer, pioneer and
bold hero,
He whose name meant strength to comrades but
a menace unto foe.

Brave this leader Daniel Boone was, and brave
was his trusty band
That marched boldly to the forest to settle and
hold a land,
That the Redmen had long traversed and claimed
as their hunting ground,
Claimed because their warrior chieftains had its
excellence first found.

Though as still as sacred temple all this wild dark
vine-crypt land,
God, it seemed, spoke through the stillness to
cheer Boone and his brave band
As they struggled for possession of that desolate
frontier,
In the stillness of a forest that was filled with
haunting fear.

Less brave men had feared and faltered and fled
back to their home lands
But the purpose of Creator found in them full
willing hands

For with courage all undaunted these heroes
rugged and bold
Had gone out to seize and grapple with a life and
death griphold.

And they labored and they suffered and endured
unwritten woes,
For th' exalting love of freedom burned within
these brave heroes,
And the impulse of a brave new people throbbed
within their brains
Of a people that could but be born of sacrifice and
pains.

And where courage is the way is and they opened
wide a gate
In a fortress, freedom's entrance, to our grand
Kentucky state,
Red the way was with their life blood, but they
held the pass, brave stood,
They the famous far forefathers of our present-
day manhood.

II

Birds flew homeward as the last rays of a full
September sun
Touched the dense folds of a forest darkly gowned
as any nun,

And a band of weary travelers with their hoof
beats broke the still,
As they took the wooded pathway to a fort upon
the hill.

“Here at last,” cried Boone in welcome, while
quick tears rushed to his eyes,
As he grasped the hand of Calloway, friend of his
enterprise,
“And you’ve brought the women with you. Ah,
how weary they must be
For the journey was a hardship to a pioneer like
me.”

“Aye, but they are brave and fearless, true
Americans at heart,
And I’ll wager that each woman here will play a
hero’s part.”
Then Boone answered, “God grant that they
prove a blessing to our land
For the heart is brave, the aim is sure, when love
supports the hand.”

Some days after, just at sunrise of an autumn day
new born,
Stood a maiden at the fortgate looking dreary and
forlorn,
Scanning close the blue-rimmed mountains for
the old homeward pathway,
Seeing but the dark-clad pine trees and the river
mists so gray.

Soon a sob swells in her bosom and a tear shows in
her eye,
But she chokes them back, her father's child must
not know how to cry,
But, alas, alas, her life that had been joyous hereto-
fore
Now did seem as melancholy as the river's mourn-
ful roar.

"Are you homesick?" asked a deep, strong voice,
of kindly interest
Quick she turned around and their eyes met, the
eyes of host and guest,
And she dropped her head, a flush of shame
spread on her brunette face,
For a settler to be homesick was, she feared, a
deep disgrace.

But though silent she the undried tear right elo-
quently pled
And it told her new companion more than lips
could e'er have said,
And there sprang within him impulse of a high
and noble good,
E'en the impulse to protect with life fair frail
young womanhood.

And he cried, "Ah, it is doleful now, but, friend,
the time soon comes
When we'll stack our guns and give our hands to
rearing of our homes,

When the ringing of the clearing ax shall fall upon
the air
As melodious as village bells recalling souls to
pray'r.

“Let thy thoughts run to the future see, oh, see
the coming throng,
That shall follow in our footsteps, lo! the vision
makes us strong,
For we hear the gracious praises that they pour on
Boone's great name,
And we share the honor with him and divide with
him the fame,

And forget the present hardships and privations
we endure.
For your homesickness I offer you this heart,—
simple and cure.
As for fear, see our strong fortress, see the men
so stout as oak,
And remember that we stand alike to guard our
womenfolk.”

Then she raised her lustrous eyes and in a low,
sweet voice began,
“Sir, I thank you for your kindness and I may
adopt your plan
Of considering the future, for the present you do
err
If you think that my dejection does arise from
cause of fear.

“For my father’s loyal blood, I trust, flows also in
my veins,
And to shrink with fear is cowardly and what my
soul disdains.
’Tis not fear, but grief, that bows me, old time
memories are thronging
And for dear, familiar faces, sir, my woman’s
heart is longing.”

As she silent fell he did resume in voice soft as
caress

“Grieve not for old friends, but make new ones
inside our lone fortress,
And the blessing you to others give may bring
your heart solace,”
Courtesying low she turned and left him marveling
at her sweet grace.

III

Summer winds were softly sighing through the
dark pine-wooded hills
Twilight drowsing deep unbroken save by weird,
wild whippoorwills
That cried out in shrill staccato, mournful senti-
nels of night,
Watching while the brooding bird world slept
secure till morning light.

Closed the gates now to the fortress and inside the
rude stockade,
Children spoke in soft, low voices, much subdued
and half afraid,
While the settlers grouped outside their doors to
take the ev'ning smoke,
Solemn visaged were and serious, and rarely ever
spoke.

Hushed the music of the spinning-wheel, the
knitting was laid by,
And the women resting looked outside and feared
the dark'ning sky.
Would the night bring peace and sleep to them or
massacre and death?
Lo, one of them sang a song of love, it was Eliza-
beth.

In the shadow of a grape she sat and sang her song
of love,
And the moon that shone upon her smiled ap-
proval from above,
Gone her longing for Virginia, and come now to
fill its place,
A sense of satisfaction that she knew was love's
sweet grace.

But she pauses now, lo! footsteps sound and her
heart gladly stirs
With the hope of his approach, 'tis he, young
Henderson appears.

“If I share the silence with you then the silence
shall seem sweet,
Speak and set thy thoughts to music and my joy
will be complete.”

Fair indeed must be the fancies that are enter-
tained by thee,
Tell me of them, sweet Elizabeth, and stop my
jealousy,
For my heart has grown so selfish with absorbing
love's sweet care,
That I like to think thy fancies follow with me
everywhere.

For a moment she was silent, summer winds swept
softly by,
And as soft as their complaining fell from her a
gentle sigh,
But she roused herself and spoke to him in love's
compelling way,
Just as if her heart sought his heart in the words
she had to say.

Though her voice was that of inquiry, her eyes
looked satisfied
That the question she would ask of him would
never be denied.
But her yearning love did seek some test to make
assurance bold
And did beg his love to prove its power by tokens
manifold.

“I was thinking just now, Samuel, if my life
should meet some grief,
Chance fall victim to the Indians, would you come
to my relief,
Would your love be guiding instinct to lead you
unto your lost,
Samuel, would your footsteps follow me with life
at any cost?”

“Aye, with life, love, what would life be were
Elizabeth not nigh?
Methinks life would a prison seem and I should
beg to die,
But depend on it no savage hand could hide you
from my heart,
For your love would always magnet prove to draw
its kindred part.

“Neither cave nor mountain fortress could conceal
your form from me
For true hearts united like our own can never
separate be.
Aye, through all the skill of savage arts love’s
practiced eye could see,
For I hold two hearts love welds to one must throb
in unity.

“Ah, but better far than this my love shall guard-
ian angel prove
To watch o’er my Elizabeth, let this thy fear
remove,

Be assured, sweetheart, thou art forearmed with
love's protecting care,
And rest thou in that confidence nor dream of
danger's snare."

IV

Sabbath stillness through the valley all the air was
calm as death,
Nature even in her labor seemed to bow in awed
rapt breath
Following the general impulse that runs through
earth as a law
That created should acknowledge homage to the
creator.

Flowed the river ever onward, but with gentle
calmness now,
Came the music of its waters as the chanting of a
vow,
And the tide that ran so lightly on its journey to
the sea,
Ever whispered, ever murmured, ever sobbed
eternity.

Came three maidens in their strolling to the shin-
ing water's side,
And their hearts were throbbing gladly with
youth's hopes that ran high tide.

Soon the moving of the waters in them kindred
spirit woke,
And they dared a Sabbath journey on pretext to
see sickfolk.

And Elizabeth the oars took as she bent her to the
task,
Her companions lay back idly in the summer's
sun to bask.
Ah, the sunshine on the water and the sunshine
on the hill,
As a golden curtain shut out every thought of
harm or ill.

"Please, Elizabeth, stop rowing, let us drift out
yet awhile,
For the air is soft, inviting, sweet it seems as
heaven's smile,
And the other shore looks gloomy, aye, and some-
what threatening too,
And a nameless touch of terror makes me shrink
back from its view."

"Little sister, you are nervous, it is that and
nothing more,
But see, at your great insistence I lift up my
dripping oar,
Lean your head on me and rest, dear, God made
Sabbath days for rest,
Sweet, the other shore's the future, that is veiled,
we know 'tis best.

“Could our eyes desery each evil that may meet us
on life's way,
We would often pause in doubt, with not enough
of faith to pray,
And the peace we might enjoy would cease be-
cause of threatened ill,
We might never cross a mountain for the dreading
of a hill.

“Ah, could I foresee each sorrow that may try my
wedded life,
I might doubt the love of Samuel, might refuse to
be his wife,
But I see naught now save kindness in the hand he
holds to me,
And my heart finds in that tenderness enough of
ecstasy.”

As they talked the boat went drifting, drifting, to
the other shore
Drifting on without an effort or the pulling of an
oar,
Quiet, now, the three young maidens, peaceful all
the land and sky,
Not a single note of discord to betoken danger
nigh,

Suddenly the young girl cried out, gray with terror
all her face
“O Elizabeth, the Indians, see, oh, see that dark-
some place.”

At that moment through the water stretched a
copper-colored hand
And began to drag the rowboat through the
marshes to the land.

Then Elizabeth sprang forward with what force
she could command,
Brought her dripping paddle down upon the dark
and treacherous hand,
But her arm grew numb and palsied by sheer
weight of terror's spell
And she cried in frenzied accents, "Samuel, O
Samuel!"

River cliffs caught up the anguish and echoed the
piercing cry,
Then deep silence in the valley save the south
wind's mournful sigh,
Flowed the river ever onward in its channel to the
sea,
Added to its oratorio the wail of tragedy.

V

Softly fell the slantwise shadows, as the sun dipped
in the west,
And the night with drowsy whisp'rings wooed the
weary world to rest,

Stridently some straying wildbird cried impa-
tience to its mate,
And th' echoings of the cliffsides seemed the eerie
call of fate.

All unnoticed by the settlers was th' evening's
soothing calms,
No news of the missing maidens filled each heart
with wild alarms,
Frenzied children sobbed out terrors that their
practiced eyes had read,
While the women, awed by anguish, thought
more horrors than they said.

When the moon broke on the valley stern-faced
men rode to the quest
Flintlock musket on each shoulder, hardy courage
in each breast.
Dark and low'ring loomed the forest as if sealed
by savage art,
But the settlers rode undaunted each to do a hero's
part.

One there was whose horse outran them, swift and
lightfoot as the breeze,
Samuel Henderson, the lover, sped like winged
bird through the trees,
And he cried his bitter anguish all unconsciously
aloud,
And his voice did seem to animate the woodland's
somber shroud.

“Lo! I warn you, all ye forests, somewhere sounds
her tuneful feet;
Yours it is to catch the music and the melody
repeat,
And my love shall meet the message, though it
sound out far away,
For my heart now travels with her, 'tis but lag-
gard feet that stay

“Held and trammeled by the body, lend me
wings, ye fleeting winds,
Till my spirit sweep the forest and her gentle
spirit finds.
Rouse ye from your dewy dreamings, all ye
flowers inhale her breath,
And ye shall be sweeter for it, O my lost Elizabeth!

“Ha, Kentuck, fly thou as wind, then, thou my
swift, sure-footed mare,
And we find the sweet Elizabeth you shall her
homeward bear.
Faster still, my good Kentuck, there now you
bravely do your part,
As with wings keep pace with hope and leave no
time for sinking heart.”

On and on they pushed through woodlands all
o'ergrown with vine and cane,
But the dark night-curtained forest showed no
evidence of gain.

Seemed the stillness of that forest as the stillness
of still death,
Not an echo, not a whisper of the lost Elizabeth.

On the morrow when the sun rose, making warm
and glad the earth,
Lo! a footprint, blessed token, hope at last had
living birth.
Bold the outline of that footprint left beside a
mountain stream,
Sprang the lover from his saddle, bent o'er it and
it did seem

As a message from the maiden showing plain her
certain route,
Carefully he journeyed forward, calmed to cau-
tious, slow pursuit
And his eyes went creeping forward, touching
each thing in detail.
Every weed and shrub and flower that he might
not miss the trail.

Here and there upon a low bush hung a raveling
of her dress,
And he touched it reverently, tenderly, as with
caress,
Passing these he found more tokens in bent twigs
a broken weed.
Well his practiced eyes were trained by love such
forest signs to read.

Mile by mile he pieced the journey that these
signs did indicate,
But his heart grew sick with dreading what might
prove the awful fate,
And he guessed their weariness and how their
hearts for home must yearn
Would it be too much to hope for that each one
should live, return ?

What if one the fairest 'mong them should be
killed to awe the rest,
How the thought struck terror to him, dimmed
the hope within his breast,
Yet he dared not hurry forward, close his eyes
must watch the trail,
For to lose one hour from it might mean that the
search would fail.

Slow the day dragged through the forest, yet the
night came all too soon,
Step by step the horse slow plodded, guided by the
faint new moon,
And the man now walked beside her stooping oft
upon his knees,
Seeking for some sign or token 'neath the great
dark forest trees.

At the first light swifter movement, hope renewed
both heart and limb,
Glad birds made the forest vocal as they sang
their morning hymn.

But the day passed all too swiftly since it brought
the night's gloom on
Then another forest vigil creeping on to meet the
morn.

Lo! at daydawn o'er the treetops showed a line of
faint blue smoke,
Oh, the wild tumultuous throbbing of the hopes
that it awoke,
For the smoke came from encampment of the
Indians, no doubt,
And to take them by surprise might mean to put
the force to rout.

Quick but carefully Boone planned it, planned a
sudden swift onslaught,
Planned it as to them the lesson by the Indians
had been taught,
Save that love lent greater boldness, more adroit-
ness to their hands,
As they dashed with courage forward, put to flight
the savage bands.

As the smoke cleared from the firing ev'ry settler
held his breath,
But young Henderson dashed forward, caught his
lost Elizabeth,
And cried back, "Good courage, comrades, see
each girl is safe and well."
Then a shout of exultation on the forest 'gan to
swell.

Greater tenderness no captors ere to captives did
devote,
Than these, as they journeyed backward to the
good Boonesborough fort,
Flowed the river ever onward in its channel to the
sea,
Seemed its lapping waters laughed the music of
love's melody.

A SONG OF BROTHERHOOD

Beneath the sun, there's family one,
And it is God's,
Then do not scorn the humble born
The man who plods.

For if we spurn the men who earn
By honest toil,
It seems to me that maybe we
Have darker soil.

Though they were found on lowly round
Of humble task,
If they did well what to them fell,
Did more ask.

With tireless tread they earn their bread
In honest sweat
God ordered it, we must admit
Else we forget.

It does no good to boast of blood
And noble name
Unless forsooth we prove the truth
Of what we claim

And noble be in sympathy
As well as name,
And bid godspeed to men of deed
And lofty aim,

But boastful pride will ne'er decide
For Brotherhood,
Nor share the spoil with men who toil
The humble good.

Nor grant the mead to men who need
A cheering song
Ah, pride's a thing of viper sting,
A cruel wrong,

The highest art lies in the heart
Not in the ways.
Whate'er their birth the men of worth
Deserve the praise.

No pride war wage to discourage
The men who live
For God's life is, and it is his
Prerogative

To arbitrate and fix the fate
Of all who live,
Appoint degrees as he shall please,
And honors give.

For God has planned that every hand
Work as it can,
To estimate the truly great
Is not for man.

For all mankind have not one mind
But common end;
Each, all, must die, then why, oh, why,
Be not their friend ?

For soon or late a common fate
Proves close kinship,
Each all demand of burying land
A narrow strip.

Grade not thou, then, thy fellowmen,
Depend on it,
They'll get their brand from God's own hand,
The Infinite.

Do thou accord with loving word,
To each some good
And ne'er deny the common cry
Of Brotherhood.

MARGARET

CHAPTER I

She knew he loved her,
Knew it as the deeply buried flower
Knows when the gracious spring has touched the
earth

With warm expansive sun, diffusive rain,
Soft winds, warm nights of brooding silences,
Although there be no sign of the new birth,
Yet every plant is in th' incipient stage
Of slow formation, developing unseen
Th' individual shape of stem and leaf,
That waits now but the sun's quick coloring,
The beauty of its blossom to presage,
In the faint green nature's voice and message.

So Reginald's love for Margaret.
He had not said in blunt cold words, "I love you."
The tongue did not his heart so quick supplant,
His modest passion was not yet so bold
Of blatant voice and noisy declaration,
But love was there in essence and nature
Developing in growing admiration
And deep respect, taproot of true affection.

Though without language it existed, lived,
Love is not vital only when in words,
Its veins and arteries are deeper laid

In thought, desire, in quickening heart throb,
In longing silences, in empty space,
In valuing all earth by one sweet face.

And thus he hesitated to declare
The passion that he did most strongly feel,
The love that was so precious to his heart
He scarcely dared with his loved one to share,
But rather hedged it in with close reserve,
As if to guard it from the blighting stare
Of criticism or perchance denial,
As if afraid to breathe in word or sound
The treasure that his heart had lately found.

Then are some trees that wrap their seed about
With fibrous substance, thick, impenetrable,
A formidable guard for those life powers
That lie within in waiting attitude,

Proof 'gainst pale sunbeams and slow drizzling
rains,
To lure and tempt it from its citadel,
Long coaxing sun days, and long nights of dew,
It waits to be assured that nature spoke,
And called it to develop life anew,
When lo! what strength set free a giant oak.

Love is not strongest that is voiced too soon,
The seeds that quickest yield to sun and rain
Oft have but shallow growth while slower ones
Will send their taproots deep into the soil.

Affection quickly formed is oft no boon
Though love more slowly moulded makes sure gain,
Whatever be its world or joy or pain.

And Margaret with reason's penetration,
Guessed well at Reginald's deep love for her,
He loved her, else why did he always seek
Her face in every gathering or throng,
And finding it rest there his gaze content,
As feed starved flocks when from confinement
turned

Upon rich meadow lands of springing grass,
Slow moving as afraid to pass the place,
Lest haply some sweet morsel might escape -
Their greedy gaze, so Reginald, intent
To find her after absence, always bent
His fixed look straight focused on her face
As if to trace some new developed charm
Or else renew allegiance to the old.
Ofttimes she'd felt his seeking, yearning eyes,
Or, ever he himself had come in view,
Had felt magnetic influence thrill her soul
From love's attractiveness so manifold
And then conviction forced a patent fact
That Reginald was there she straightway knew,
A truth her face proclaimed in crimson hue.

He loved her for his life did most expand,
When subject to her presence' influence,
With some he was full taciturn reserved,
There were who called him far too cold, austere,

Too conscious of his handsome face, fine form,
And ancestry that boasted noble blood,
Toward her not so, he showed a gentle cheer
Not born of bashfulness or conscious pride
A purely normal poise of temperament,
Unconscious revelation of the fact,
That in this world there are some characters
Completed only when to those allied
Who make the complement of personal lack,
Nature's demand in every wedded life,
As when a flower bends it toward the sun,
In suppliant form, petitioning attitude
As if beseeching of the original source
Of life a fuller measure of its power
Doth then and there appropriate and use
The rays so needed for its perfect bloom
Without which it had lived a poor dwarfed thing
Unworthy of the poet's heralding.

He loved her for his restless roving mind,
Seemed well content, communing with her thought
Till they had met he'd journeyed round the world
Pursuing, never reaching what he'd sought,
An endless quest, for he could never find
What he most craved and yet lacked to locate
Till they had met, as when some ship storm blown,
Long voyaging and seeking long a port,
Comes unexpectedly on waters deep,
And claims that shore a harbor all its own,
So did he find in her a homing shore
Where his tossed heart might anchor evermore.

'Twas very strange to see his new content.
Tranquil he seemed, no longer roamed abroad,
Men marveled at his quiet, settled ways,
And said this new calm to his bearing lent
A better poise, a bolder, manlier mien.
He now could rank among the file of men
As fellow soldier of a life campaign,
Of purpose to be fought for to the end,
For he was giving to his vast estate
The personal supervision of his mind,
And Margaret saw it all, nor wondered she,
Her mind the reason gave with ecstasy.

His hungry heart now fully satisfied
Gave peaceful poise unto his active brain,
And fed with energy a dormant will
That else a chrysalis would long remain,
And gave his life before too purposeless
Fixed motive for immediate enterprise,
As when some bird long time by storm winds
 blown
Flits aimlessly from bush to tree and back
And twits some faint and joyless song, nor tries
To test the scope of its own melody
Because forsooth there is a numbing lack
Of interest, but lo! this same dull bird
When once it finds, in some far greenwood tree,
Congenial mate and they two start in quest
Of mosses dried, of twigs and lichen threads,
To shape and fashion by united work
Into that dear familiar form a nest

That shall henceforth a common refuge be,
This same dull bird peals forth in minstrelsy.

He loved her and she knew it not alone,
Because of each expression that he gave,
But she subjective evidence did feel,
That did confirm and seal th' established fact,
Her heart now like a broad and placid lake,
Felt full to overflowing with content,
And o'er her well-poised spirit there would steal
A sense of satisfaction so complete,
As left remaining no disturbing doubt,
No sad abstractions and no vain desires
For hopes illusive, too ephemeral, fleet,
For her poor heart to ever realize,
In any land that lay beneath the skies.

No more established was his love for her
Than was devoted Margaret's to him.
She'd loved him now it seemed to her always,
For in her gentle nature was no stir
Of wild excitement over newborn love,
So fully did he fill her own ideal,
And reap the harvest of her willing praise.

Love seemed to her the one emotion real,
That she had known developed in right phase,
Attractiveness the greatest possible.
As when some cramped and cabined chrysalis
Breaks forth one day from dark environment
To try a universe of brilliant bliss,

So had her heart long time before known love
But of such poor weak, humble crawling sort,
She scarce could recognize it as akin
To this sensation that did soar above,
To take from sky, from earth, from rolling sea
The beauty wherewith God each one had blest
To shadow forth the joy that she possessed,

And this her love was truly manifold,
For in it was the reverence and respect,
That she had always to her father given,
A natural instinct primitive and bold,
For th' author of her being, God's elect
And chosen guardian of her earthly life,
And then long time ago her life had known
The sweet affection of a mother's care,
Toward which her heart responsiveness had
 shown,
In adoration that did bud and grow,
With passing years, into devotional form,
That kept her youth with love's light tender, warm.

Nor was that all, her love for Reginald
Had in it somewhat of that dear regard
That she had felt for some companion fond
Her family chose to nominate as friend,—
The sweet communion of congenial minds
And sympathetic fellowship of thoughts
That in the sacred bond of friendship blend,
Nor all, for Reginald to her now stood,
Interpreter of things lofty and high,

Unrecognized, the transcendental good,
That she had never hoped to understand.
Nor ever knew existed until now
They were revealed, made plain by luminous love
Thus smiling she would oftentimes compare
Her once dark heart to some November wood,
All brown, forbidding, wintry bleak and bare,
When lo! from out the cloud-cast sky there burst
A brilliant sun so scintillant with light
It cast upon the earth a golden flood,
Until the trees that once so somber showed,
Each all in wealth of autumn beauty glowed.

CHAPTER II

Glad springtime, blessed season of the year,
When th' earth seems most akin to paradise,
When every animal set free from fear
Of dread starvation, on the green grass lies
In quiet confidence of nature's care.
Not satisfied alone with present food,
For that were satisfaction far too brief,
The pleasing prospect of continued good
Has well assuaged their hunger, brought relief
A subtler reason of contented mood
The gentle guise in which kind nature wooed.

From bird and flower exhaled a buoyancy,
Of growing life and quick development,
E'en brooks welled o'er their banks in truancy,

As if o'erflowing waters now were bent
Upon a widening channel to the sea.
Margaret felt the wooing of the air
And laid aside the music of guitar
To try the springtime world so wondrous fair
When lo! she saw that Reginald afar
Was coming toward her home with springing step
And then indeed to Margaret it seemed
He was the very spirit of the spring
The living flesh ideal she had dreamed.
As through her heart love's melody did ring
Her face toward his as a flower turned toward the
sun

Much brighter glowed through his attractiveness
And fired with interest her mind did guess
What now his purpose, yet whate'er his mission
To grant his wish would be her hope's fruition.

"I've come to ask of you a springtime walk
Through shadowy lanes, bright fields and wood-
side nooks.

It seems to me our tongues let loose can talk
As spring the flowers, as flow the meadow brooks,
For I have fancied by suggestion faint
That there has fall'n from me as from the flowers
The chilling silence of some bleak restraint
Thus giving me possession of my powers. "

A flood of crimson dyed her damask cheek,
O'erpowering with emotion's clamorous might
Her senses till she scarce could think or speak,

But quick she did recover from her fright,
The first expressive sign of it a smile,
And said in thrilling tones of ecstasy,
"Tis strange though we were separate a mile
That our desires so similar should be,
For I myself have longed to take the air
And breathe the witching fragrance of the spring,
And now a common pleasure we will share.
I tried awhile ago to play and sing
But my guitar did seem by far too small
Companion and support for my own mirth,
For out of doors it seemed that each and all
Were throbbing with the minstrelsy of earth.
Therefore I brought my song into the air
To mingle with the merry myriad throng
That makes the world to-day so wondrous fair
And fills the whole creation with a song."
She smiled as through the trees they passed along

And he with answering smile did quick reply:
"I can interpret well your vernal mood,
For I myself all day have wondered why
I longed to go into the vibrant wood.
I found no longer in my favorite books
The satisfaction that I seemed to need.
My truant fancy pined for shadowy nooks
And every sense did for the sunshine plead
I left my study in a dazed surprise,
My idle thoughts I could not understand
When lo! I felt the force of wooing skies
A sweet compelling power on every hand,

And then there dawned upon my thoughts a sense
Of kinship to this life so manifold
That seemed to me a blessed recompense
For mind wrapped up in a material mould
And fancy then recalled creation's morn,
When God did clothe in substance His desire
And breathed in living form His sovereign will
So that we feel akin to poet's lyre
And also to the birds, the trees, the rill.
No wonder, then, our hearts are all afire
Deep throbs of sympathy all live things thrill
In common joys that nature likes t' instil."

He paused, and bees and birds took up the strain,
And every living creature that could stir
In its harmonic measure did make plain
Spring's quick'ning impulse by its ceaseless whirr.
The butterfly in whirling larger grew,
The flowers waking from their wintry beds
Stretched toward the sun and from it life force
drew

And gaily bloomed by lifting up their heads,
And Reginald looked long at Margaret,
That love was growing bolder he could feel.
Her longed to tell her of it too, and yet
A strange reluctance o'er his heart did steal.
This that they now enjoyed seemed paradise,
Or so akin to it he was content
To nurse the mood, nor seemed it to him wise
To venture more, lest this sweet joy be spent
In disregardful grasping for th' untried.

That might lose what he now possessed and
 more,
 The higher bliss of hope's horizon wide,
 And yet insistent springtime urged him on,
 'Twas in his veins like quick, inspiring fire.
 Life's day could not be always dewy morn
 To make fruition of his long desire.
 Would prove his own love's progress full and
 broad
 Akin to what he saw on every side
 In trees, in flowers, in birds, in greening sward,
 And in this golden harvest of his heart
 He would bind up love's sheaf, fulfill his part.
 "Sweet Margaret," he spoke with tenderness
 That sent the blood swift flying from her face.
 "It seems to me that God is here to bless,
 To fill each living thing with tender grace
 In this springtime, the lovetide of the year,
 I pray you look abroad and see the earth
 O'er which there falls the smile of vernal skies;
 It seems to me the world has double worth
 Just now, and we its beauty fuller prize,
 Because it springs from winter's frozen death.
 And this renascence that we love to see
 With rivers veins and every wind a breath
 Is annual emblem of eternity
 Seems melting clouds have let slip from above
 Some qualities of that ethereal clime
 That sets the world in tune, in tune to love
 But beautiful as is this vernal view,
 'Tis perfect, Margaret, alone with you."

He paused and looked intently at the brook
That flowed so smoothly, lightly, on its way,
And then he bent on Margaret a look
That seemed for further audience to pray
But she, or ever he could 'gin to speak,
Said brokenly, "Oh, would this fair to-day
Could last always and never more nor less
If only wheresoe'er our feet should stray
We'd find this general air of loveliness,
Methinks we would to fairer beings grow,
Perhaps renew that Paradise once lost
Which joy for human hearts again to know
A haven would prove for souls long tempest tossed.
O Reginald, I sometimes seek to reach
For higher conception of spiritual light,
And then I shudd'ring wonder what shall teach
My mind to grasp ideals that are right,
And hold them, though my straining heart should
break
With weight of woe that no one could surmount
But my poor self, could I forbear to slake
My longing lips at some forbidden fount
Waiting — waiting for the eternal good
That may not be attained in this sad state
Of mortal being, there come times when I
Oft pray to God that my weak life might die
Or ever it such sacrifice must try."

"Nay, now, sweet friend, such thoughts are not for
you,
For you whose life appears so wondrous glad,

We both have said how fair is this spring view,
But spring or summer nature never had
With all her flower-filled countenance a face
As fair as yours, nor could she imitate
In all her varied forms one half the grace
That you so freely show in every state.
So then I pray you, fair one, do not borrow
From dread unknown condition aught of grief
That you may never know, or joy or sorrow,
Life as it comes to us is truly brief;
But let it bring whatever pain it will
I can prescribe for you a panacea
That does hedge round the heart from every ill,
And give it o'er distress a magic skill.

You do not guess, then 'sooth I must declare
My remedy, sweet Margaret, 'tis love;
A natural simple doctors can't prepare,
It comes to us with blessing from above.
It seems God in great mercy did ordain
That Adam driven forth from Paradise
Should not relinquish every heavenly gain
That always streaks of Eden's sunny skies
Should gleam for him in Eve's adoring eyes;
That in the gentle cadence of her words
So full of tenderness and sympathy
Should sing again those sweet celestial birds
That seemed to strike for love the very key."

She smiled, but all unconsciously a sigh
'Scaped from her lips and jarred the tranquil air,

Revealing speck of sadness in her sky
Though all things else appeared so wondrous fair,
“I hold with you that love is best of all
The wonderful endowments of the soul;
Of virtues one that seemed t’ escape the fall
That marred with withering blight and note of dole
Both man and nature steeped with Adam’s stain
Of general frailty, universal sin,
Without which harmony’s prevailing strain
Had wrapped us round and all had music been.
Yet what though love be pure and undefiled,
Methinks it scarcely can in this world thrive,
Where each thing moans itself a dwarfed sin child
And marvels yet that it is still alive
In atmosphere so uncongenial.
How could this lonely virtue give its best
Unless indeed ’twere through some sad denial
That it must fruitage yield like all the rest
Submitting to the universal test.

Just as she ceased to speak the spring sun sank,
A lonely bird went hurrying to its nest,
And through the woods there crept an air so dank
As it had blown straight from lost souls distressed.
“I know not why,” she said in low, awed breath.
“But some great sorrow seems to gloom my heart,
’Tis not the shadow of my certain death.
Howe’er remote, more does it seem the part
I am to play in some soul battlefield,
Some spiritual contest bitterest of all strife
In which the soul ignoble were to yield

Unworthy of the boon of human life.
Believe you in portents, omens, and that kind
Of wizard fear the deadliest to the mind?"

He smiled a gentle, reassuring smile,
And said, "'Tis but the shadow of the night.
Attend to me and I will soon beguile
Your fears and drive away this ogre fright.
In coming out into the vernal wood
We slipped into the comradeship of flowers,
And now we feel the spell of nature's mood,
We shudder at th' approach of darkness' powers
But rouse you from this baleful reverie,
Behold the glory of yon shining Mars,
What matters it sweet friend, to you or me
What earth's commotions be, what sound of wars?
If there should come the worst mind may conceive
It would not help the evil aught to grieve."

"Ah, Reginald, you men are never sad;
You look on life with mild complacent view;
What you can't help is never very bad.
Uncomfortable? Oh, no, never you;
'Tis bad philosophy to suffer dread,
To know discomfort, harbor sorrow long;
'Tis no use dying ever till one's dead.
Why weep when that same breath might sing a
song?

And so to help you on your joyous way
God gave you woman with her smiling face,
The best poised woman sings a roundelay,

And nothing shows of sorrow's mournful trace.
Forgive me, Reginald, I know 'tis best
That it should be as God has planned this way,
And yet behold how doubly hard the test
That we must smile, let come whatever may,
Or else withdraw alone to weep and pray."

"Sweet Margaret, I cannot you forgive,
The reason you did never do me wrong.
If only I might always — always live
As happily I'd think my life a song
Of endless bliss, of deep, unbroken joy;
But now my energies must all be bent
To fathom well your reasoning so deep.
Perchance my mind shall find some argument
To answer why we men do never weep.
I shall not tax you long, but briefly state
The explanation of our broad content.
Think you a man could e'er on sorrow wait,
When once he knew that for his good was meant,
The last and best of God's entire creation?
It may be contemplating this sublime
And glorious fate exalted elevation
Has seemed to film his eyes and daze his mind,
So if we do not see things as we should
'Tis that we all like Adam are love blind,
Discerning not the evil from the good,
Content alone to please sweet woman's mood."

She smiled but sadly at his gentle art
As they two passed now 'neath her own home trees

Forecasting sorrow compassed all her heart,
She could not mirthful seem e'en him to please.
"O Reginald, forgive my stupid mood
Methinks I do but poor companion prove
Mayhap the winds have fed me fairies' food,
For if my heart were human it would move
At thy bright raillery — farewell, good friend,
May joyous dreams a sweeter comfort lend."

CHAPTER III

Full-tide of growth — 'tis rushing summer now,
The spring of preparation's o'er and past,
The farmer rests and rests his rusty plow,
For nature tends the furrow at the last.
Both leaf and blade matured, fast forms the grain,
Each day the earth by sun and rain is wooed
To make a storehouse wide of all the plain
And turn her latent forces into food,
Thus nature broadly smiles in summer mood

There are degrees of growth in every clime,
All earth is measured by material gauge;
Affection, too, has seasons, and its time,
Its youth, its manhood, and its riper age.
Both Margaret and Reginald felt this
And neither cared to bluntly say, "I love you,"
For they both felt it now sufficient bliss
To know that love existed sacred, true,
For they had grown beyond that questioning stage

Of jealousy, of craven doubt, and fear
That often mars love's volume on first page
And tarnishes what else would gold appear,
That they might breathe together one sweet air
Made sweeter by the other's exhalation,
Might view all things together and compare
All life and nature from one common station,
This, this for them was highest exaltation

Though thrilled with love and all its quickening
art

Fair Margaret seemed pensive, taciturn,
A sorrow dark had fallen across her heart
That shadowed all her way at every turn
A cherished sister, older by some years,
Had died and at her sad, untimely death
Life had oped wide her locks of bitter tears,
Let loose the icy blast of anguish' breath
For Margaret looked through the vista long
Of her own youth. Ah, memory sweet, the way
Of her lost love, melodious as a song
And fragrant as the apple blooms of May;
Full well she minded now the day, the hour,
When that affection had more sacred grown.

It was when mother died, when, with love's power,
Sister had said, "Sweet Margaret, my own,
You are my child, born in the bitterest throes
And travail of young hearts, a mother's death,
With all the anguish that the orphan knows,
But weep not, my firstborn, I pledge my soul

That I will dull the edge of sorrow's dart,
You shall be first and last, the very whole
Of my desire, new life with you shall start,
When sisterhood attempts the mother's part."

Strange, mystic life that like kaleidoscope
Doth shift the point of view and change the scene,
And make fruition seed another hope
As from dried harvest fields starts springtime's
green.

Here was her sister dead and one child left,
A sweet young girl, so beautiful and fair,
She seemed too young to be so soon bereft
Of life's best boon, a mother's tender care,
And Margaret, recalling all the past
Swept by love's tide did solemnly declare,

"Dear one, as you for me did undertake
To do a mother's part, 'fore God I swear
That for the love I bear you, for your sake
I'll take your child, my fair, young, sweet Mildred,
Transplant her in the garden of my heart
And by affection shall her life be led
And trained in love's divinest, holiest art.
She shall be held the apple of my eyes,
The object of my best and tenderest care.
Naught will I hold too great a sacrifice
To undertake for her, for her to bear.
Her good shall be the burden of my pray'r."

The sister, with death's clasp so tender clinging,
Said, "Margaret, your pledge and solemn vow

Shall through my soul eternally be ringing
As clear and honest as I hear it now.
And, oh, it dulls the roar of death's fierce strife
To hear you pledge and promise her such love.
Methinks, I shall not now fear for her life
For I shall bear your promise far above,
And God shall witness betwixt you and me,
Farewell, I leave my Mildred unto thee."

How dim the eyes where life's spark no more
burned,

How desolate the house where she had dwelt,
And Margaret soon with her charge returned
That death's gloom by the child might not be
felt.

With tender hands she led her to her hearth
To lavish on her henceforth that sweet care
That she'd received from her who gave her birth.

Promptly she said with love's compelling tone,

"Dear child, this is your home forever more,

"Tis not more mine than 'tis your very own,

For you 'tis filled with sweet affection's store."

As some young bird that has been sore storm
blown

Finds sheltering nook and nestles hushed and
still,

Subdued but tranquil, so did seem Mildred.

She watched her aunt with eyes of deep content

And then with sweet confiding laid her head

Upon her foster heart, adopted breast,

And breathed a long deep sigh of welcome rest.

And Reginald was quick to sympathize.
He called the very evening they came back,
And in his eyes there welled up tender tears,
To see the lonely two in somber black.
He took the orphan's hand and said, "My 'friend
I count this meeting with you sacred pleasure,
My willing services to you I lend,
And pray you will command me at your leisure,
And let me prove myself your friend indeed,
No matter what your lightest wish may choose,
To me 'twill sacred be, and I'll attend,
'Twill not be in my heart to e'er refuse
Any request that you to me shall send."
And as he took her hand in his warm pair
He oped his lips and said with smile full kind,
"I ask of heaven no sweeter, holier care,
Nor one that's more congenial to my mind."
And then he turned once more to Margaret
And said, "For your sweet sake I was so bold,
And now I pray that you henceforth may let
Me prove this truth, for declarations cold
Unless it be fact founded, based on truth,
Elsewise it is the mere bombast of youth."

And Margaret straightway with answ'ring smile
Said, "Reginald, I thank you, friend, so much
Your sympathy doth well my grief beguile,
For hearts sore hurt find balm in pity's touch.
It is to spirits sad and torn like mine
A great support, as stands the giant oak
To proffer strength unto some trampled vine

So did you strengthen me when you thus spoke
And compassed all the prospect of my need,
And Reginald, I promise you, my grief
Henceforth shall silent be, you need not fear,
For, oh, I find this life so brief, so brief,
I would not mar one day's dawn with a tear.
For every time I'm face to face with death
I'm made to value this our life more high,
I feel that I should sing with every breath,
Nor ever murmur more, nor ever cry,
But seek to banish every trace of gloom
To its appointed place, the silent tomb."

He looked at her with fond, admiring eyes,
And said, "your proposed joyance I receive,
For you are capable of sacrifice —
The hardest, to seem joyous when you grieve.
While I, a man, am selfish, and I'm glad
To hear you promise e'en this show of mirth,
For I must tell you, Margaret, when you're sad
To me there is no light in all the earth.
And yet I boast a motive that's more pure,
'Tis this, when you will smile the world to bless,
Your smile will be reflexive and will cure
The baleful malady of your distress;
Thus am I eager that you joy shall feign
That it may soothe your own heart's bitter pain."

Just then young Mildred closer came again,
And looking up in their two faces said,
The while hot tears swift down her face did rain,

“My father and my mother both are dead
And I am left in this great world alone,
But God has sent you two to me instead
As foster parents, substitutes of own.
Oh, will you take me for your little child,
And love me, for 'tis love that most I crave?
I somehow feel that love's the greatest good,
Without which starved my heart would be for
food.”

Then Reginald and Marg'ret their hands laid
In blessing on the fair head, upturned face.
“Sweet Mildred,” Margaret said, “be not afraid;
What love can do your sorrow to displace
We'll undertake, I swear it for us both.”
And Reginald in solemn assent bowed
And sealed the sacred compact with a tear.
He realized the obligation vowed
And longed to do whatever should appear,
Nor did he entertain a single fear.

Appeased the girl of child-heart then withdrew
And strolled away to breathe the flower-filled air.
“How beautiful she is and how like you,”
Exclaimed the man, “at least the bud is fair
And promise gives that once full blown the rose
Will fairer be and perchance will compare
With one so beautiful 'twere highest praise
To be but likened to her, though 'tis true
That this same matchless one did so upraise
Her standard of perfection rare and new

No one may hope to reach her shining fame,
No matter what she may of beauty claim."

And Margaret answered, smiling through her
tears,

"Nay, nay, you do forget our compact sworn.
Deserved praise uplifts the heart and cheers,
And we must swear this foster child when grown
Will be the fairest rose that ever bloomed,
But fairer than her form is her fair mind;
I never knew a temperament more sweet.
She is so amiable and so refined
All virtues seem in her sweet life to meet.
And as she says she lives but to be loved,
Love is as necessary to her life
As are sunbeams and raindrops to the flowers.
I believe she could not live in grief or strife,
She has not such resistive, hardy powers.
Sometimes I think of her and am affrighted
Lest she her heart's affection should misplace
If she should ever love, love unrequited
A fatal malady her life would sieze
And she would victim fall to dread disease."

Quick Reginald with frowning face began,
"Why, Margaret, the thought's impossible,
I know not how you chanced on such a plan.
It seems to me the cup of joy'd be full
For king or peasant, any sort of man
To claim for bride this beautiful Mildred;
But she is young and it may be for years

She will remain untouched, unmoved by love;
And so I think you may put by such fears.
Our hardest task, I think, will be to prove
Whatever suitor reach his hand for hers,
That any man, no matter what his life,
Could ever worthy be of such a wife."

The summer days with gorgeous freight passed by,
A train that Flora filled with golden fruits,
Each day presented harvests to the eye,
Soft airs blew melodies through Pan's sweet flutes.
Bright butterflies disporting in the sun
Did look the very spirit of the times.
Such harmonies through all creation run
The heaven with earth, it seemed, was ringing
rhymes

And on the universal melody
Invisibly but surely there did float
Divine afflatus, heaven's respiration;
'Twas love, God-given love, music's keynote,
The one unbroken strain since man's creation.
It thrilled through Margaret with each pulse beat,
Till she did feel her life held wondrous gladness,
And that her heart's sweet harvest was complete,
And pitied all the world in that it had less.

To Reginald she said one day with awe,
"I lay no claim to having seen a vision,
Nor dared my feet transcend the mortal law,
To tempt the golden height of fields Elysian.
But, Reginald, sometimes I do believe

That while we linger' here in human guise,
Perchance it is allowed that we receive
Some joy supreme, foretaste of Paradise.
When hearts to holy joys their gates ope wide
Methinks the spirit then must upward rise
And human bliss be at its flush full tide
Such joy to me has lately been supplied."

And Reginald felt then his spirit move
Toward Margaret with yearning tenderness,
And straightway purposed to declare his love
The while he prayed kind heaven his suit to bless.
But like a golden cloud across the sun
Young Mildred then came softly in the room,
And Reginald felt enter with that one
A cold restraint that seemed to shadow gloom.
But Margaret went gently to her niece,
And took the broad sunhat from off her head;
A mass of curls fell loose at that release,
An aureole they looked by sunlight shed.
With true maternal fondness, then, and pride
The woman stooped and kissed the fresh young
face,
And as she lingering stood long by her side
There seemed to breathe from each a common
grace,
And Reginald looked long at one, then both;
A rose and rosebud they of one fair growth.

Swift passed the summer like a happy dream
That seems to shadow peace and tenderness

As when some sleeping babe, with half-ope eyes,
Now smiles and smiles and coos and all but speaks;
And those who do not know look in surprise
At what they deem but queer odd infant freaks.
Its mother says, "My babe looks toward the skies
And talks with angels, heavenly friends it seeks."
So unto Margaret her summer's dream;
She did not understand such wondrous bliss,
So far it did transcend her earthly scope.
She wondered silently and knew but this,
It seemed the bright horizon of her hope.

CHAPTER IV

November with its cowl and garb of gray,
A lowly penitent the dreary earth.
A nun all nature bowed to weep and pray.
Far, far removed is every sign of mirth.
Aye, into dark eclipse seems passed the day.
Lo! how remote the springtime's joyous birth.
All twilight now, just light enough to say,
Hushed pray'rs; aye, praying seems supremest
worth
Now that all radiance has passed away,
And left the vaulted sky a cloister gray.

Ah, is not nature a material phase
Of the heart's emotion, what it feels and fears
Look out and mark those sun-crowned brilliant
days

See hope's horizon where no doubt appears.
Do not these have familiar, common ways?
Behold November's cold and leaden sky
From which gray mists to dull rains form and
fall;

Behold the heart where griefs depressing lie,
Distil in tears, like nature spirits all,
Perchance great God of nature mirror made
Where man his heart's experience may see
Though darkly that is better than delayed
To wait the floodlight of eternity.

All day had Margaret depression felt.
To hope for brighter days her heart seemed loth.
She'd dreamed that she, a suppliant, had knelt
Before the throne of God with solemn oath,
That she all joy of life would hence forswear
If He, the merciful, would grant her strength
The heavy burden of her heart to bear.
And then she waked and found the sky all gray,
A fitting stage for drama of her dream.
With trembling limbs she knelt and tried to pray,
But lo! her faith's sky gray, of hope no gleam
To mark the breaking of the night away.
She rose, a settled sadness on her brow,
So real her grief she did not think to pause
And analyze this shadow dark and fell,
Assure her heart there was no actual cause
For such depression. Had she heard a knell
To toll the passing of some valued friend
She had not been more certain of the bell

Than she felt now that her heart's faith did trend
Toward some great sorrow, hopes decline and
end.

All day the dark home walls had seemed to press
And burden all her heart with pent-up dread,
A sepulchre they formed for her distress.
Toward evening from their dismalness she fled.
With throbbing brain she went into the wood,
And leaned disconsolate on lichened tree,
'Twas well, for nature has a healing good
For hearts sore pressed, a subtle sympathy.
And Margaret gazed through the woods all bare,
Stripped were they now of verdant leaf and bloom,
And thus denuded how they did compare
With her poor heart so silent, gray with gloom,
Why, why did God who made the glorious May,
When life and joy through all creation ran,
Why did He give who reigns with sovereign sway,
November nature disappointment man.
The silent woods did offer no reply,
The woman gazed and all seemed mystery
When lo! her eyes did chance to glimpse the sky,
Swift came the thought there is more yet to be.
The unexplained demands eternity,
For here life finds but dark, uncertain path,
All crowded o'er with bramble ills and wrongs.
But lo! the spirit greater fulness hath
In the high hope where it resides, belongs.
Perplexed and still amazed Margaret gropes
And seeks some fixed assurance for her faith,

Like Noah's dove, foundation for her hopes
When all unconsciously with thought there
weaves

The faint suggestion of a presence near,
Discordant crushing of dried, withered leaves.
A moment more and Mildred does appear,
Her face suffused with blushes, eyes ablaze,
Yet humid still which prove that she has cried
But not for grief, the wet eyes show no phase
Of grief or sorrow, but stretched open wide
Flash with what seems to be both joy and pride.
"Aunt Margaret, I've something to confide
And yet I know not secrets how to tell,"
She paused; a brighter flush her pink cheeks dyed,
A moment more and on the earth she fell
And like a child crept close to Margaret's side.
"You ask not what, to help me and relieve
Embarrassment, with which my lips are tied,
Then I must brave my secret all alone,
So I will hide my face, sweet, and confess
That I'm in love. O Aunt, did not you moan?
I fear 'tis omen bad for my young love,
And I had hoped that you my joy would own
And crown with blessings, for, lest you approve
My first and last and only real love taste,
I should declare that I had loved in vain,
And all my bloom of youth would go to waste,
For never, never could I love again.
But you are tranquil now and I proceed.
No doubt it was surprise that made you start,
That past your willing interest I lead

Into the darkest recess of my heart.
O Aunt, 'tis Reginald I've come to love.
You start again, a sign of your surprise.
And there, I feel your hand shake through your
glove,
Sweet guide, I pray lay bare before my eyes
If there be reason why my love's misplaced,
And yet you might as well my grave make bare
And show me my own coffin darkly cased,
So certain would death follow my despair.
His life from me can never be effaced
Except by death, and now you will forbear
To argue aught against my heart's first choice.
So then I'll tell you why I so much care:
For me there is no music but his voice,
No power or beauty but his form so fair.
And I do seem transported by his eyes,
And carried to some far Elysian height
As when some flower that in the valley lies
Is caught by winds, and borne up by their might
Breathes out its fragrance far toward Paradise,
So in his love my life does find a scope
That moves my soul to loftier desires
For he my heart's bright sun and highest hope
Imagination, pride, ambition fires,
I did not know my heart so wide, so deep,
Until the plummet of his love did sound it,
I did not know my hope could take such leap
Until my heart made bold; cried, love I've found it.
If you should say he is too old for me,
Then I'm too young to live, perforce must die,

But tell me, dear, how old's eternity?
Yet lisping babes its glories yearn to try.
Oh, sweet, my aunt, I've learned one tested truth
Clear written on experience's page,
Love is eternal, its perennial youth
Knows no decay, no lapse of time or age.
I wonder that you have not loved him, aunt,
Your own ideal cannot be more high;
But there are hearts that do not love, and can't,
Ah, well, they had no Reginald close by.
But you, sweet aunt, are mystery to me,
In that you have so long this great man known,
Have ever been the favored one that he
Has praised so much and placed upon the throne
Of admiration, yet you do not care
For his address nor seem to want to own
His love that needs but favor to prepare
For your possession, you intend alone
To tread the pathway of your earthly life,
But I — I cannot understand such taste,
For always I have longed to be a wife
Elsewise it seems to me there'd go to waste
My heart's devotion, loving is to me
As blooming to the rose, singing to birds.
Without this cause for love my life would be
As some poor rhyme of loose, meaningless words.
And aunt I come to you with one request
That you will take my case indeed to heart,
And counsel me to do what you think best.
Ah well, I know you'll do a mother's part
And doing that you will keep well in mind

I have not loved before nor can again,
So in your verdict you, my judge, must find
For Reginald, or bar me from all men.
A silence fell between them, heavy, chill,
Unbroken all save by the wind's low moan,
And a crow's cry that sounded raucous, shrill,
Reproachful all for being left alone.

“Sweet Aunt, methinks I feel you tremble still.
I do not wonder you are shocked at this,
But truth will always speak, do what we will,
Therefore I now confess to you my bliss,
Knowing that you must find it out full soon,
As well the sun might try to hide at noon
Its glowing face, as I my love conceal.
And now my aunt a message I will send
To Reginald by you, who are his friend,
Tell him I love him, nay, nay do not stir
And tremble so, for I think he loves me,
And that's the reason of my ecstasy.
For now he smiles and smiles whene'er we meet,
And seems so pleased that I am drawing near
And in his voice are accents tender, sweet,
That I can well interpret to be love,
And yet his lips will not speak out the words
That his full heart does long so much to prove.
Do you remember what he said to me
When first we met, methinks it ran like this:
“‘ No matter what your lightest wish may choose,
To me 'twill sacred be and I'll attend.
"Twill not be in my heart to e'er refuse

Any request that you to me may send.' ”
I loved him then for words so kind and true.
Tell him, my aunt, all that I say to you,
And that I send by you this strange request
That he will grant to me love in return.
Tell him I do transcend the woman's part
Merely to be the mouthpiece of his heart
For I have heard it said that he was so shy,
Modest, and disregardful of his worth
That he could never of himself apply
For woman's love; but see he walks this way.
So I will leave, and now, sweet aunt, I pray
You represent me as my mother would,
And I can ask of you no higher good.”

As he walked nearer there fell on the air
The mournful crushing of dead shattered leaves,
And Margaret trembling felt fall to despair
The treasured hopes that she thought bound in
sheaves.

“ Why are you sitting here alone, my friend ?
This wind-swept woods must prove poor com-
pany,

For you are one, it seems, whom God did send
Into this dreary world to scatter light.

A veritable sunbeam you appear,
To rout the dull despair of sorrow's night,
And in its place put gladness and good cheer.
I've often thought your face framed in rose
crown

Would sweetly typify the month of May,

The violet eyes and wild rose in your cheek
The joyous springtime seem t' announce and
 speak."

She forced a smile and said with downcast face,
"My heart is far from springtime's joyance now.
November has usurped sweet April's place
With cloud of dread and dark, forbidding brow,
The fear that I did one time entertain
Has passed from out my fancy's realm domain
And taken a living shape and stalks amain.
Mildred's in love, and I am anxious lest
Her love be not returned, and in that case
She would be so chagrined and so distressed
Her life would fade and die for very grief.
O friend, you who have long time been my friend.
Prove me your friendship now in your counsel.
God grant his wisdom may your words attend
His peace and favor in your language dwell."

"Margaret, you do but borrow trouble now
In surmising what never could be true.
What man could look lightly on Mildred's brow,
Her lustrous eyes that in their rich, rare hue
Are like two violets steeped in sunlit dew,
Her cheeks in which June roses never fade.
Her lips so coral pink against the pearls,
Her teeth; nay, nay, my friend, be not dismayed.
Who could escape the meshes of her curls
That fall a shower of gold about her face
And form the very crown of youthful grace?"

“ I’m glad your eyes have caught the wondrous
whole

Of her beauty,” so Margaret began.

“ But, friend, this one whom she loves with her
soul

Knows nothing of it, and since he’s a man

’Tis right and natural that he should proclaim

His love and admiration first for her;

Or otherwise ’twould be her woman’s shame

To proffer love or ever it was asked.”

“ A woman’s, yes; but Mildred’s a mere child.

A sweet wild rose so unconventional,

Methinks ’twould make a man’s heart thrill, beat
fast,

To know that in the unpruned ways of youth

Her love leaped over bounds, forgot itself,

To gain its object and proclaim its truth.”

“ Kind is th’ apology you make for her,

Good friend, and it relieves my harrassed mind

To know that you a man can make appear

Arguments in defense of my frail kind.

On one point more I crave your personal aid,

If this one whom she loves should not return

Her love would you shrink back or be afraid

To urge him t’ it, you’ll do that for me?

Oh, Reginald, methinks eternity

Will but be long enough to thank you for ’t.”

“ Sweet Margaret, I now solemnly swear

To do all in my power to bring about

Responsive love for this one who’s so rare,

So there, I beg you, put your fears to rout.
I know not who this favored man can be,
But that you like him is enough for me
To be convinced he's worthy of your niece;
So banish dread, and set your mind at ease.
I'll do my best to bring to happy state
This romance that you seem to advocate,
And now one favor I ask in return
Show me this man, for in my heart I yearn
To see him."

" Ah, Reginald, you know him, but not so well
But that you might know him e'en better yet,
Capable of truth and goodness, such as dwell
But in great souls that grudge not, nor regret
Whatever sacrifice love may demand
Or friendship claim, but now I grant to you
The favor asked, my debt you'll then condone.
Go to yon brook where willows hide from view
The limpid stream and you will see alone
The man whom Mildred loves. One more request
You must not come to see me for one week,
For I would have you ponder well, your best,
This subject, go and find him by the stream,
And mind, I've spoken truth, no idle dream."

" 'Tis strange, but I do feel some mystery
About t' enclose me, 'tis with such great skill
You women speak of romance; but I go
And if in this weird world we meet no more
Know that I victim fell to friend or foe."

Upon his face a mingled smile and frown,
He rose reluctantly and ventured on.

Margaret sat and mused in misery.
"How ignorant is he of my design.
I pity him as he will pity me
When he shall begin my purpose to divine.
How long 'twill take him to be reconciled
'To my request I do not know, for men
Are not so quick to sacrifice as we
Women are; but once he sees his duty then
The struggle will begin for mastery
Of himself; and Reginald, right well I know,
Right will conquer that and regard for me.
You will remember, then, your double vows,
The ones you made to me, those to Mildred,
You who were never known to break your faith,
Though first you may much wish those vows un-
said.

Will find they must be kept. Truth has one path
An' 'twill always be found by those who seek 't;
Meanwhile Mildred's fair face silent appeal
Shall be; methinks no better advocate
Could she engage, for beauty always gains
Access unto the minds and hearts of men,
Though logic fail and rhetoric waste her pains,
This night I shall set sail for foreign shore,
Mildred I leave unto protecting God,
My father and my old friend Reginald.
When I essayed to do a mother's part,
I did not know 'twould crush my own poor heart;

But life, all life is born of sacrifice.
God grant my higher life from this death rise
And Mildred's happiness bought, at such cost,
May fill the measure up that my heart lost.
Farewell, dark wood, methinks thou't not so dark
As the dark future's sea on which I embark."

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